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FACT SHEET

MAYOR SANDERS ANNOUNCES CITY'S FIRST GENERAL PLAN UPDATE IN 29 YEARS

City's 'Blueprint for Future Growth' Will Help Shape San Diego for the Next 20 to 30 Years; Specific Community Plan Updates Also Underway

Mayor Jerry Sanders announced today that the City's new General Plan, its foundation for development, will go before the City Council for adoption this afternoon after five years of comprehensive work with a vast network of stakeholders and policy-makers that have made long-range planning for the City a priority. The new General Plan—updated comprehensively for the first time in 29 years—provides guidance to balance the needs of a growing city while enhancing the quality of life for current and future San Diegans.

The Mayor also announced that the City is also in the process of updating four Community Plans, which are tailored to meet the specific characteristics and needs of the many diverse communities in San Diego. Five more Community Plans will begin the process in 2009.

Long-range planning is critical if a City is to retain a high quality of life as it grows. It is necessary for coordinating and sustaining environmental, economic, and aesthetic goals in a way that is efficient, equitable, and inspiring.

ABOUT THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is the foundation upon which all land use decisions in the City are based. It expresses a citywide vision and provides a comprehensive policy framework for how the City should grow and develop, provide public services, and maintain the qualities that define the City of San Diego over the next 20 to 30 years. The General Plan does not change land use designations or zoning on individual properties, but rather provides policy direction for future community plan updates, discretionary project review, and implementation programs.

29 YEARS SINCE LAST GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
CITY OF VILLAGES STRATEGY EMPLOYED TO MEET CURRENT GROWTH CHALLENGE

San Diego's General Plan was last updated comprehensively in 1979—a time when approximately half of the City's developable acreage was still vacant. Because less than four percent of the City's land now remains vacant and available for new development, the plan's policies represent a shift in focus from how to develop vacant land to how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities.

The General Plan proactively addresses the challenges of growth through the City of Villages strategy. The strategy is to focus growth into mixed-use villages that are pedestrian-friendly districts, of different scales, linked to an improved regional transit system. A “village” is a place where a mix of residential, commercial, employment and civic uses are present and integrated. Each village will be unique to the community in which it is located, yet all villages will be pedestrian-friendly, and characterized by inviting, accessible and attractive streets and public spaces. Individual villages will offer a variety of housing types and affordability levels. By directing growth primarily toward village centers, the strategy works to preserve established residential neighborhoods and open spaces, to efficiently provide public facilities, and manage the City's growth over the long term.

The strategy draws upon the character and strengths of San Diego's natural environment, neighborhoods, commercial centers, institutions, and employment centers. It recognizes the value of San Diego's distinctive neighborhoods and open spaces that together form the City as a whole.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE NEW GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan's Guiding Principles are to achieve:

1. An open space network formed by parks, canyons, river valleys, habitats, beaches, and ocean;
2. Diverse residential communities formed by the open space network;
3. Compact and walkable mixed-use villages of different scales within communities;
4. Employment centers for a strong economy;
5. An integrated regional transportation network of walkways, bikeways, transit, roadways, and freeways that efficiently link communities and villages to each other and to employment centers;
6. High quality, affordable, and well-maintained public facilities to serve the City's population, workers, and visitors;
7. Historic districts and sites that respect our heritage;
8. Balanced communities that offer opportunities for all San Diegans and share citywide responsibilities;
9. A clean and sustainable environment; and,
10. A high aesthetic standard.

GENERAL PLAN CONTENT

The General Plan provides policy guidance to balance the needs of a growing city while enhancing quality of life for current and future San Diegans. It is comprised of an introductory Strategic Framework chapter which includes the plan's Guiding Principles, and the following elements: Land Use and Community Planning; Mobility; Economic Prosperity; Public Facilities, Services and Safety; Urban Design; Recreation; Historic Preservation; Conservation; and Noise. The update to the Housing Element was adopted by the City Council under a separate cover on December 5, 2006.

Strategic Framework - an introductory section of the General Plan that describes the role and purpose of the General Plan, outlines the City of Villages strategy, presents ten Guiding Principles that helped to shape the General Plan, summarizes the plan's ten elements, and discusses how implementation will occur.

Land Use and Community Planning Element - contains policy direction for implementing the City of Villages strategy, provides citywide land use policies, and establishes community plans as integral components of the General Plan. It includes a General Plan Land Use and Streets Map, which is a compilation of adopted community plan land use and circulation system maps.

What's new?

- The 1979 General Plan did not include a citywide land use element, relying instead on community plans
- Policies support changes in development patterns to combine multiple uses in village centers
- Sets the stage for more focused community plans that will work in concert with the General Plan
- Categorizes 160 community plan designations currently in use into 26 recommended community plan designations for application in future plan updates
- Relies upon community plan updates/amendments to designate village sites
- No land use designation or zoning changes will occur concurrently with the update
- Edits made to the October 2006 Draft address General Plan implementation and internal consistency, and include new language to protect airports from encroachment of incompatible land uses.
- More recent staff edits provide additional clarity on the ability of community plans to address community-specific issues.

Mobility Element - advances a strategy for congestion relief and increased transportation choices in a manner that strengthens the City of Villages land use vision. Policies call for working proactively with regional agencies to plan and fund transportation projects/services that the City needs. The "Transit/Land Use Connections Map" shows the relationship between existing and planned transit services and the City's planned land uses.

What's New?

- “Toolboxes” are proposed that provide citywide direction while recognizing the need for site-specific solutions to community parking and traffic issues
- Has a greater emphasis on multi-modal investments than in the past
- Edits to the October 2006 Draft include additional language related to maintenance, the health benefits of walkable communities, and the City’s relationship with SANDAG.

Urban Design Element - establishes a set of design principles from which future physical design decisions can be based. Policies call for respecting San Diego’s natural topography and distinctive neighborhoods, providing public art, and encouraging the development of walkable, transit-oriented communities.

Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element - includes policies on the prioritization and provision of public facilities and services, evaluation of new growth, guidelines for implementing a financing strategy, and guidelines for the provision of specific facilities.

What's New?

- Recognizes that there is a public facilities deficit
- Calls for facilities deficiencies to be remedied through diverse funding resources;
- Calls for broader areas of benefit when establishing assessment districts
- Updates facilities guidelines to take into account infill development needs
- Edits were made to the October 2006 Draft to clarify and refine financing and prioritization policies.
- Additional policies were added to address climate change impacts and disaster preparedness

Recreation Element - seeks to acquire, develop, operate/maintain, increase and enhance public recreation opportunities and facilities throughout the City. The element contains guidelines for park and recreation facilities and presents alternative strategies to meet those guidelines.

What's New?

- Calls for the creation of a comprehensive, citywide Parks Master Plan to guide park and open space acquisition, design and development, recreational programming and needed maintenance over the next 20-30 years.
- Maintains existing guidelines of a minimum of 2.8 useable acres of population-based park land to be provided per for every 1,000 residents, and provides policy direction for the future Parks Master Plan to address the use of “equivalencies” to meet a portion of population-based park needs. Equivalencies policies originally included in the October 2006 Draft General Plan were edited in response to public comments. Provides a Park Guidelines table and a Recreation Facilities Guidelines table which outline minimum standards and strategies for development of population-based park and recreation

facilities. Expands the types of parks that can count toward fulfilling population-based park guidelines.

Economic Prosperity Element - includes policies aimed at supporting a diverse, innovative and sustainable local economy.. The Element includes policies to protect remaining industrial lands.

What's New?

- Inclusion of a Prime Industrial Land map that identifies lands that should be preserved for industrial use by limiting “sensitive receptor” uses. However, the map does not change the land use designation of a property. Several property owners have requested that their properties be removed from the map.
- An industrial lands conversion/collocation policy that sets forth criteria for where residential uses are appropriately mixed with employment uses.

Conservation Element - calls for the City to be a model for sustainable development, to address climate change impacts, and to preserve quality of life in San Diego. Policies are to conserve natural resources; protect unique landforms; preserve and manage our open space and canyon systems, beaches and watercourses; prevent and reduce pollution; reduce the City’s carbon footprint, and promote clean technology industries.

What's New?

- A new focus on climate change including an expanded discussion and a new table that identifies climate change issues and provides references to where related policies can be found throughout the General Plan.
- Policies that address sustainable building and practices that reduce global climate change.
- Policies that address reducing emissions that contribute to global climate change.
- Policies to encourage clean tech industries to benefit San Diego’s environment and economy.
- Incorporation of policies (here and in other elements, such as the Recreation Element) to support aspects of the *Canyonlands* initiative.

Historic Preservation Element - strives to guide the preservation, protection, restoration and rehabilitation of historical and cultural resources so that a clear sense of how the City gained its present form and substance can be maintained.

Noise Element - contains policies addressing compatible land uses and the incorporation of noise abatement measures for new uses to protect people from living and working in an excessive noise environment. It includes a matrix that identifies compatible, conditionally compatible, and incompatible land uses by noise decibel level.

What's New?

- Various edits were made to Table NE-3 – Land Use –Noise Compatibility Guidelines
- Edits to the October 2006 Draft include additional language and revised policies related to:
 - Airport noise and motor vehicle noise to better address existing land use conditions; and
 - Commercial noise, industrial noise, and public noise to avoid potential implementation conflicts with the City's noise ordinance.

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY: THE CITY'S PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

From January 2003 to September 2007, the City has engaged the public through the following:

- A series of forums entitled "From Controversy to Solutions" was held. The public was invited to the forums which were televised, and often repeated, on the City's public access television channel, City TV24. City Council members and other community leaders participated as panelists. Each forum provided a public venue to discuss a variety of differing points of view, and to assist staff in policy development. The forum topics included the overall general plan update, economic prosperity, mobility, conservation, recreation, commercial development, and public facilities.
- An e-mail database was developed that has grown to more than 2,700 contacts. . E-mails were used to provide updated reports on each element, to announce availability of drafts, and to solicit membership for ad hoc issue groups. E-mail notices were also used to provide notice of workshops and Planning Commission and City Council meetings.
- More than 25 public workshops and hearings (combined total) were held by the City Council's Land Use and Housing Committee, the City Council's Natural Resources and Culture Committee, and the Planning Commission to discuss General Plan issues and policies.

More than 250 meetings with community planning groups, stakeholders, and other interest groups were held to present information and receive input. The Community Planners Committee (CPC), the CPC General Plan Subcommittee and staff held approximately 30 meetings to complete an exhaustive review of draft General Plan policies, which resulted in many edits that have been incorporated in the revised Draft General Plan.

- The LU&H Technical Advisory Committee discussed the General Plan multiple times and formed a subcommittee to allow for more in-depth review.
- A series of three General Plan Public Meetings were held in May – June 2007 at local libraries.
- Two public scoping meetings were held in September 2006 to gain input on the Notice of Preparation for the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). Thirty-eight letters of comment on the draft PEIR were received, and responded to.

Since the September 2007 Draft was released, staff has continued to work with stakeholders and respond to public comments on the proposed plan.

CREATING A GENERAL PLAN ACTION PLAN

The next step after council adoption of the General Plan will be to develop a draft Action Plan that outlines the implementation schedule for the General Plan in short-, mid- and long-term stages.

WHAT'S NEXT? - COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATES

With the adoption of the General Plan, the work of updating specific community plans will become much more efficient with new, overarching policy guidelines already in place. Community plans contain specific proposals for future land uses and public improvements in a given community. A community plan is part of the City's General Plan. It provides tailored policies and a long-range physical development guide for elected officials and citizens engaged in community development. Typical elements found in a community plan include:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Urban Design
- Public Facilities and Services
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development

REASONS FOR UPDATING COMMUNITY PLANS

Approximately one-third of the City's 50 community and associated plans need to be updated within the next five years to address circumstances, standards, and priorities that have changed since they were first adopted, and to respond to:

- existing and anticipated infrastructure needs
- economic/development pressures
- health and safety issues
- incompatible mixed-uses
- need for more affordable housing

Community Plan Updates are currently underway for:

- Ocean Beach
- Otay Mesa
- Barrio Logan
- The Grantville Master Plan, which includes community plan amendments to the Navajo and Tierrasanta plans, will get started soon.

It is anticipated that updates will begin in FY '09 for:

- Uptown
- North Park
- Golden Hill
- Midway
- Old Town San Diego